

ACCOUNT
OF THE
METHODS AND MOTIVES
FOR THE
UNION
AND
SUBMISSION to the ASSEMBLY
Offered and Subscribed
BY
THOMAS LINING,
ALEXANDER SHEILDS,
MR. WILLIAM BOYD.

Philippians 1:10. Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded.
If ye be of another mind, God shall reveal even this unto you.
Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

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MR. THOMAS TILLY
MR. ALLEN
MR. WILLIAM

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An Account of the Methods and Motives of the late Union and Submission to the
 Assembly, offered and Subscribed by Mr. Thomas Lining, Mr. Alex-
 ander Shields, and Mr. William Boyd.



AMONG other Characters that Commend *Presbyterial*
 Government, as the only Order and Plat-form of Govern-
 ment, which Christ Jesus, the only Head and Lawgiver,
 hath instituted in His Church, above all other Forms
 introduced by the Inventions and Usurpations of Men;
 This is one, that it is the best Antidote for *Schism*, that
 ever was found: And where ever it is erected and exerted in its full Free-
 dom and Power, it brings all that acknowledge Subjection to it, unto
 Union and Harmony, keeps them in it, and reduces them into it, when
 it hath been broken. The Impression of its Divine Authority, being
 so Authentick, that it enforces a Conviction upon all that have regard
 To the Law and the Testimony and extorts a Confession from all, that
 have a Conscience, that there is nothing in it, when established,
 in its due Dimensions, which may not and must not be subjected
 unto, (nay the greatest of its Enemies, even the *Papists* and *Pres-*
byterians themselves, tho they plead for many Additions, are forced to ac-
 knowledge, that there is little or nothing in *Presbytery*, which is not of
 Divine Institution, and which is not also admitted in their own Govern-
 ment, tho depraved and corrupted by their audacious Additaments:
 And a challenge may be given, to all of them, to instance any thing
 in its whole Nature, Tenour, Order, Power, Rules, or Administra-
 tions, that is not founded upon, deduced from, & consonant unto the New
 Testament Oracles) whereas there are several things in all other Forms
 of Government, which the more conscientious a Man be, he will rea-
 dily be found the more hesitant to submit to. The Eutaxie, comely Or-
 der, and Beauty of this Ordinance of Christ (making the Church, both
 Comely and Terrible, and as *Jerusalem* compactly built) having likewise
 an attractive Vertue to allure all its Subjects and Members, to an ami-
 cable Amity, and to constrain to Concord, as well as an Awful Maje-
 sty (tho no way Magisterial) to restrain from divisive disorders. And
 its course of Administration, being in such a Gradation of Subordinati-
 ons, of Inferiour Judicatories to Superior, that hardly can any Schism

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have footing ere it be crushed, or rooting ere it be suppressed, when the Government is in its Integrity: Which was the reason rendered by K. *Ja.* the 6th. why in *Scotland* there was so little Heresie, or Schism known. Hence whatsoever the Patrons of the *Prelatick Hierarchie*, *Papists* and *Prelatists*, who in this Symbolize, say to the contrary, in favours of *Episcopacy*, as if it were the best expedient to prevent and remove Schism; And to the reproach of *Presbytry*, as if it were a Government, that did engender and encrease Division and Schismatick Courses: It is so well known in *Scotland*, that *Prelacy* is the Mother of Schism, and *Presbytry* the Medicine of it, that it needs not a laborious Probation. The Probation of 130 years experience, may serve instead of many Proofs. Let it be instanced since the Reformation, When was there ever Union when *Prelacy* was established? When was there ever Schism when *Presbytry* was reintegrated? When was there ever Concord when *Presbytry* declined? When was there ever any thing but Discord when *Prelacy* was on its ascendant? Where or when was there ever a Division which had not *Prelacy*, (or the Projects or Practices of those that inclined and declined to it) for its cause and occasion, rife and spring? And how or when was it ever removed and remedied, and Union restored but by and under *Presbytry*. All the Divisions and Breaches of this Church, from the Reformation to the year 1650, were occasioned by, stated for, and continued only under *Prelacy*: And even that from thence to 1660, about the *Publick Resolutions*, was stated upon, and occasioned, abetted and continued, by the Projects and Practices of *Malignants*, striving to ingyre themselves, into places of Power and Trust, on design to re-introduce *Prelacy*. Which Division then commenced, and at that time not cured, because *Presbyterial Government* then declined, and the Authority of *General Assemblies* was then enervated, hath continued to this day, as the wretched Rise of all our woful Rents, which hath racked, and almost ruined the Remnant, that adhered to the Reformation, who before that were as much feared and envied for Union, as since that, they have been flouted at, and despised for Division, and yet want nothing to make them as much admired and respected as before, but to recover their former Union, by returning to their former Order, and repenting for their Deviations from it.

But since the year 1660, the Rise and Continuance of all our Divisions, either with the professed Enemies of the Covenanted Reformation, or among the professed Friends thereof, hath only flowed from the Usurpations and Impositions, of the *Popish, Prelatical and Malignant Party*, which

which some imposed upon, complied with, and others opposed. And the only reason of their incurableness hitherto, hath been the want of *Presbyterial Government* in its full Force and Freedom: The happy Restoration whereof in the measure it hath already arrived to since the Arrival and Advancement of King *William* to the Government of these Nations, under whose Patrocinny, and in whose fight the Lord hath extended his Mercy, to give the Church this reviving, to set up the House of our God, and to repair the Desolations thereof, and to give us a Wall in our Judah) hath already reduced some who had continued in an abstracted and separate way for several years, unto Union and Communion with the rest of their Brethren in the Ministry, and hath engaged them into an orderly Submission to the Authority of this Church, in all Her respective Judicatories. Which may give ground of hope, that as this hath been the fruit of the first Assembly, after the Restoration of *Presbyterial Government*; So the re-integration thereof, is its full Vigor and Authority, and recovery of its former Faithfulness, and Zeal in Administration, in following Assemblies, will through the Mercy of GOD, heal all remaining Breaches.

But designing here to give a short Relation of our Methods in prosecuting, and our Motives that induced us to endeavour this Union; It will not be amiss, for the better understanding of the same, to hint a little more particularly, at the Causes, Means, and Measures of our Divisions. They all proceeded, as was said before, from the Usurpation and impositions, of the *Papish*, *Prelatical*, and *Malignant* faction: For when *Prelacy* came in by force and fraud, and by the yeeldings of these that should have ventured their All, in withstanding its Introduction, the Introducers of it were enabled and encouraged, at their own leasure and pleasure, without control, to break down the Carved work of our Reformation, and the Walls and Hedges and Legal Bulwarks of Righteous *Laws* and *Solemn Covenants*, that fenced it, with the Axe of an *Act Rescissory*. Some gave all the Countenance and Submission then required by Law, to the Intrusion of *Prelats* and their *Curats*, by frequenting their Churches: Others thought it their duty to stand at a distance, and venture upon the hazard of disobedience, in a Testimony against that sin. When again they advanced the blasphemous *Supremacy*, to its hight (ex-auctorating Christ Jesus, of being only Head, King, and Lawgiver, to His Church, and declaring it to be a mortal Kings inherent right, to be Co-partner with Christ in that His incommunicable Prerogative) And by the usurped Power thereof (presuming they had now totally & finally overcome

overcome Christs Ministers, and intending to flatter whom they could not hector out of their duty of contending against their Usurpations). Obtruded a sort of a Liberty, to some of them to Preach, under the Notion of an *Indulgence*, but such as flowed from, stood upon, and was modified by the Supremacy: Some embraced this, others opposed and witnessed against it. Lastly when by wicked Oaths, Tests and Bonds, imposed to debauch Consciences (which some inclined to comply with, or connive at; Others thought it necessary to testify against) a passage was prepared for the introduction of *Papery*: And a gap was opened for it, by the late *Popish Toleration*: Some thought it fit to purchase the opportunity and Liberty of Preaching by addressing for and embracing of it: Others durst not have any thing to do with it. Nor forbear a Testimony against it. These Usurpations with the defections flowing therefrom, in Compliance therewith (while they stood as stumbling blocks and snares, and as we conceived as Idoles of jealousy, in the entry of the House of the Lord; So that we thought we could not have access unto the Sanctuary, without being interpreted, to give some respect or acknowledgement, or subjection, directly or indirectly, to those Idols and Incroachments so dishonourable to the LORD and offensive to our Consciences) did fear and deter us from Communion with many Godly, Reverend and Honoured Ministers of this Church, so *Indulged* and *Tolerated*, in these Circumstances, and obliged us to continue our Testimony against them, in an abstracted way, when the Church was in that broken state, deprived of the remedy of Church Judicatories, whereunto we might apply (in which case, we alwayes held there should be no separation without previous Application to them, and before their Judicial Sentence) And ween the case was so circumstantiate, that we judged their Ministry, in the then exercise thereof, at that time, in the place where they Preached, under the Authority of the *Indulgence* and *Toleration*, could not be countenanced or concurred with by us, without participating of the guilt of submitting to, and symbolizing with Mens sinful Encroachments. Yet we never owned a Positive or Active, Total or Stated Separation from the Church of *Scotland*; Or the Ministry thereof: Nor did we form separate Churches under another Government or Ministry, distinct from, or independent upon the *Presbyterial Church of Scotland*; tho with this we were branded. Only for the time, we avouched a Negative, Passive, & Conditional Abstraction, from these Ministers in the circumstances above specified: Not because only we thought these were the Personal Sins of the Ministers (for we alwayes declared our abhorrrance of that notion so deservedly exploded by the learned Divines of this Church, that

that the Personal Sins of Fellow Worshipers, Ministers or Professors, did pollute the Ordinances, or made Communion with them therein sinful) but, because we had reason to fear, they should be our Sins, as well as theirs, if, as they had given the submission to these foresaid **Usurpations** required of them by Law, so we should give the submission to them required of us by Law, by joyning.

This was the case and cause of our Divisions, until the Lord was pleased in our greatest extremity, by sending over King *William*, as a renowned Instrument in His Hand, to rescue us from *Popery* and Slavery, to remember this broken and bruised Church, and to give us a reviving in our Bondage, with a high Hand, and in a surprizing manner, and to remove our Yokes, under which we groaned, in a measure surpassing our expectations. By which Emergencies of Providence, in such a manner, removing causes of our Divisions, we could not but encourage our selves in the Hope, that the effects should also be in time removed. And that He that healed our bruises from the yokes of long oppressing Enemies, might also lend His Hand and Help, to heal our Breaches of Divisions with our dissentient Friends and Brethren, which we expected to obtain, if ever *Presbyterian Government*, and *Ecclesiastick Assemblies*, in that beautiful Order, should be established again in this Land, which we longed for, even for the recovery of *Union*, as well as for other Advantages. In this Encouragement and Expectation, after some litle endeavours used in the opportunity of that Interregnum, to demolish and destroy the *Popish* Monuments of Idolatry, and to purge the Churches of the *West-Country* of the *Episcopal Curats* we emitted an Apology at *Douglas*. The Tenour whereof here follows.

An Apology of the General Meeting of the United Societies of some *Presbyterians*, Dissenting from, and Protesting against the *Toleration*, for their Rising and Continuing in *Armes*, in the present Juncture.

THE various Clamours and Constructions made of our Rising in *Armes* at the time, and the reproaches of Disorders, fastned thereupon (tho in it self innocent, and never intended by us, for the offence of any, but such as all Zealous Protestants and good Patriots, will owne to be Enemies of GOD, and of all Mankind; and such as we are under indispensible obligations in our Places and Stations, to endeavour to suppress and extirpate; Yet because it is our present unhappiness, to have all our Actions misconstrued, and censured under the most odious

odious and invidious Character, that the Malice of some can put upon them) Do seem to require, for the vindication of our Testimony for the Cause of Christ, Exoneration of our selves, and removing any Jealousies or Suspensions, which through misinformation, or prejudice any may conceive of us; That before we dismiss, We Declare to all concerned, That it is not by any Contrivance of ours, that we have either gathered, or continued in defensive Armes hitherto, but have been drawn and called to it, by a special surprise of astonishing Providence. For, tho' indeed, in the sense of the indispensable and indisputable necessity and expediency of giving some active Testimony against Popery, and of the duty of throwing down the Monuments of Idolatry (formerly erected, and lately more and more encouraged under the Patrociny & Protection of this Popish Toleration) we have been several times consulting about some endeavours, in our poor Capacity to discharge that duty, with the least tumult or trouble to the Country that was possible (not being able any longer to endure to see this purely Reformed and Covenanted Land, polluted again with Idolatry, and impunity of the Entycers thereunto, and thereby exposed to the inevitable Wrath of the Most High, without some witness of our indignation at the same) and thereupon had appointed this same concurrence of our Brethren, at this present Meeting, this same day, to conclude upon some Course to effectuate it; Yet as many of our Brethren, in several corners of the Land, without any Correspondance or Communication with one another, were animated and encouraged at one and the same time to set about this work, with others that the Lord stirred up to Zeal against Popish Idolatry: So the extraordinary Emergents, alarming the Country with fears and many reports, of the Papists intending and Attempting to raise fire and Sword through the Land, did prevent our appointments, and provoked us to go to Armes, for the preservation of our Religion, Lives, and Liberties, defence of the Country, and Relief of our Brethren, that lay nearest the hazard then threatened and feared. In which posture some of our Number, that were furthest remove, from the sure intelligence of the truth of these Alarms, have continued hitherto, not being willing to disperse until by this Meeting formerly appointed, somewhat should be concluded, with common consent, as expedient for the present juncture, and emitted for their vindication from some disorders, falsely imputed, and most grievous to us.

We do therefore further declare, That whereas Reports have come to us, that some have robbed Gentlemen and some Episcopal Curats, of their Horse and Armes, Money or Household stuff. As for Horse and Armes, taken in these Tumultuary Confusions, if any be amongst us, as we have endeavoured, so we shall endeavour Restitution: But as far money or any other thing robbed from these, we neither know the guilty persons, nor are partakers with them, but do disowne Disclaim and Detest all such disorderly and abominable practises. And further, that we avow and avouch it as our duty, bound upon us, from the Word of God, Solemn Covenants

Covenants, and Constitutions of this Church, to endeavour by all approved means, the Extirpation of Prelacy, as well as Popery; And therefore do resolve through the Lords help, and as He shall give us Call and Capacity, to contribute our utmost assistance, for the removing and dispossessing the Prelatical Curats, from the Churches, upon which they are intruded: Yet we do not approve, nor shall we attempt the taking of any thing that belongs to them.

Moreover, we mean not now, nor whensoever we may be constrained, or called to rise in Armes defensive, to wrong or encroach upon the Priviledges of any City, Burgh or Town whatsoever, or disturb the Peace of the Country, either by Tumults, or contending together in Armes unnecessarily, to oppress either one or other: But as now we intend, so at any other time, when we are together, we shall dismiss and go home, and live in quiet so long, as either Duty or Safety will permit us. But this we be (althrough Grace) as ready as ever to suffer Persecution, upon the same Heads of Truth, that we have hitherto contended for, and resolve rather to lose our dearest blood, then to part with one boof of them. And are as resolute as ever to defend ourselves & all our Covenanted Brethren, in the common Cause & Testimony, against all Assaults of our Malignant Enemies, so far as we can resist: Yet if they will forbear to persist in their Persecuting and Murdering us, for the time, we intend not to take or seek revenge of them, until we see what access the Lord our Avenger, will give to a Legal Prosecution of them. Only this much opposition, they must expect, that we will not embodie with them, in any association for the Cause, which they have betrayed & destroyed, nor with any other known & avowed Enemies of Truth and God- Kings, Religion and Liberty. But since the Lord hath in His wonderful Providence (which we adore) raised up, helped and honoured the Illustrious Prince of Orange, to be an Instrument in His Hand, of breaking in a great measure, the unsupportable Yoke of that Absolute Tyranny, under which we have been long bowling, As we pray the Lord, so to incline his Heart, so to favour the Lords righteous Cause, and that he may pity and not permit, the yet remaining Treacherous and Troublent Promoters, Abettors, and Executioners of that Tyranny, so to devide and destroy us any more: So we mind in due season to remonstrate to his Highness, the unparalleled Grievances and Severities, we have sustained from them: And in the mean time, do our best, in dependance on the Lords strength, to defend ourselves against their Insults.

Finally, we conclude, declaring our cordial and constant Adherence to the good Old Way and Cause of Scotlands Covenanted Reformation, in all its received and established, Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government according to the Word of God, Confession of Faith, Catechisms, National Covenant, & Solemn League, Solemn Acknowledgement of Sins and Engagement to Duties, Causes of Wrath, Acts of General Assemblies, both the ancient unrepealled Acts, and those from 1638.

to 1650. And all the Testimonies, Protestations, Remonstrances, and Declarations, of old and of late, founded upon and consonant to the same, against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, Tyranny, and all the Encroachments of Absolute Power over Laws and Liberties of Church and State either by Persecution or Toleration. This in short is the State of our Testimony, transmitted to us, from our renowned Ancestors, sealed by the Martyrs and Confessors of CHRIST, in our day; Which we hope the Lord will more and more Vindicate and Propagate to Posterity.

Published at Douglash the 4th. of January, 1689.

THereafter beginning to get more Converse with some of our Brethren, which the violence of Persecution precluded all access to before; And this Converse begetting more desires of Unity and Amity with them: We entertained the first Motion from some of the Reverend Ministers of Glasgow, to confer with them about Points of Difference, and Methods of Composing them. The Conferences at that time, produced only some janglings, and at length some *Overtures*, tendered on both sides, wherein we could not agree. These Reverend Brethren proposing (after some premitted Considerations pressing the necessity of Union) "That an Act of Oblivion be agreed upon for all Failings, about points or Practises controverted among *Presbyterians*, since the year 1650, to this day; And that the Basis of our Union, be the Holy Scriptures, sensed and applied, for the Resolution of all controverted practises amongst us, according to the laudable Constitutions, Customs, Practises, Acts of our National Assemblies, Books of Discipline, Confession of Faith, Covenants, &c. That caution be observed from all Reflections, &c. That after sighting and approving their Ordinations and Licenses, those Ministers and Preachers, who have formerly acted Independently upon their Brethren, preach Collegiatly with some Minister settled in a *Presbytery*, for removing of former Stumblings. And finally, that such Failings be laid to heart, by all sorts of Ministers and Preachers, as they are convinced of, that they be set down in order, and pitched on as Causes of a Publick Fast and Humiliation upon some week day, through all the Meetings of *Presbyterians* within this Kingdom, and that the Sins of the People, be intermixed among these Causes, &c. This was the sum of the *Overtures* offered by these Reverend Ministers, only in their own name, but they promised to mediate with the rest of the Ministers, for according thereunto. In Answer to these, we proposed these *Overtures* premitting also

also some Motives, together with the qualifications of the Union we desired) " That the Basis of our Union be the Word of GOD, Confessions
 " of Faith, Covenants, Books of Discipline, Acts of General Assemblies,
 " and the whole Contexture of the Order of this Church, before the
 " *Publick Resolutions*, in the purest Periods of this Church, which we may
 " with one mind seek to have reintegrated. That we might search
 " and try our wayes, and Unite first in Confessing Sins, in keeping days
 " of Humiliation for the same; Wherein we offered to Confess our Of-
 " fences, so far as we could be convinced any manner of way, that
 " Church Judicatories should appoint: And desired the Ministers from
 " whom we differed, to Confess Doctrinally their Offences, that have been
 " most stumbling, viz. *Hearing the Prelatical Curats, the Late Indulgence,*
 " *Addressing for, and Accepting of the Toleration, &c.* And consent in procuring
 " the Condemnation of these things, in Ecclesiastick Assemblies. That
 " the *Covenants* might be Renewed, with accommodation to our times.
 " and a Solemn Acknowledgement of the publick Breaches and Engage-
 " ment to the Duties thereof, applied to the present day. That to pre-
 " vent all future Divisions, the former Offences might never hereafter
 " be complied with, under pain of Church Censures, nor any other
 " Mould or Model of *Presbyterian Government*, than what was established
 " between the years 1638 and 1650. Nor any State Contrivance or
 " Constitution whatsoever, be admitted or submitted unto, which may
 " infer a recognizance of any *Erastian Usurpation*. That in the mean
 " time, the Ministers settled in Paroches, under the late *Indulgences* and
 " *Toleration*, might declare, that now they have another Holding, than
 " either of these; And that they now officiate in places where they are
 " fixed, according to the old *Presbyterian Order*. And finally, that en-
 " deavours should be used to check and suppress the Foments, that nou-
 " rish and encrease Division, on either hand, as heart Animosities, A-
 " lienations of Affection, Passion, Prejudice, Jealousies, receiving and
 " reporting Misinformations, and all other things of that nature tending
 " thereunto.

These Mutual Overtures, being refered to farther Consideration, we thought it a good Expedient, both to promot and direct a desirable Union with our Brethren, to Renew the Covenants, with a publick Acknowledgment, both of their and our breaches thereof, and Engagement, to the Duties of the Covenants, with accommodation to our present Circumstances; which we Solemnly Accomplished at *Lesmahago March 3. 1689.* In the Acknowledgement, we confess with relation to bygone dif-

ferences (*Art. 2. Page. 56.*) " That as many by defection, both in Com-
 " pliance with Prelacy and Erastianisme, hath broken the Churches
 " beauty and Bands, Order, and Union, in making a faction repugnant
 " to her established Order, and censurable by her standing Acts, in bring-
 " ing in Novations in the Government, and making a rent in the bowels
 " of the Church, by causing Divisions, and Offences, contrare to the
 " Doctrine of this Church, have made themselves guiltie of Schism; So
 " others on the other hand have upon slender and unufficient Grounds,
 " separate both from Ministers (even the most Faithful and Zealous,
 " and such as were not chargeable with Compliances) and from Christ-
 " ian Societies and Families, because of Differences in judgement, in
 " incident debates, not necessary, nor material, nor wherein the Testi-
 " mony of Christ was much concerned, or because of personal Offences,
 " easily removed, not observing the Rules of Christ, for removing them,
 " nor having respect to His great Commands of Charity, forbearance,
 " forgiving one another, or condescendency: And between divided
 " Parties, which in our day, have long been byring and devouring one
 " another, there hath been too much both of sinful Union and Confede-
 " racy, in terms prejudicial to Truth and Duty, on the one hand, and
 " of sinful Heats, Animosities, Jealousies, Pride, Passion, and Preju-
 " dices, on the other hand; Grieving the Spirit of G O D, eating up
 " the Power, and much hindering the holy Practice and spiritual Exer-
 " cise of Religion. And too much also of sowing discords among Bre-
 " thren, and promoting our Contentions by too credulous and sedulous
 " taking up, & spreading reports & reproaches one of another. And in our
 " Renewed Engagement to Covenant Duties, with relation to present differen-
 " ces, and Union with our Brethren, we declared our resolved Endeavours
 " and Vowes, " On the one hand to labour to recover and preserve the
 " Liberty and Purity of the Worship of God, from all Corruptions, No-
 " vations and Inventions of Men, *Popish, Prelatical, Erastian*, or any o-
 " ther; And if we could not gett those Corruptions reformed or remo-
 " ved, to study to keep our selves free of Communion and Participation
 " with the same, (according to *Artic. 1. §. 2. Pag. 68.*) And to refuse,
 " withstand, and witness against all Encroachments on the Liberties of
 " this Church, in all time coming; And withdraw our selves from Com-
 " munion with all such Meetings and Congregations, that hold their
 " Freedom from, & are modified by such Usurpations (as *Indulgences* and
 " *Tolerations*, according to *Artic. 2. §. 3. ibid.*) And on the other hand,
 " That we shall guard against all Schism and sinful Separation, or unjust,

" rash,

" rash, and disorderly withdrawing from Congregations, Societies, or
 " or any part of the Communion of the true Reformed Covenanted
 " Church of Scotland, holding purely and intirely the Doctrine, Wor-
 " ship, Discipline and Government of the same, in Principle and Exer-
 " cise, according to the Rules of Christ, and standing Acts and Con-
 " stitutions of this Church: And that we shall neither gather nor set up
 " formed separate Churches or Societies, under other Ordinances, Go-
 " vernment or Ministry, distinct from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland;
 " Nor withdraw from Minister or Member of that Body, for any offence
 " in any Case, where either the Offence may be Legally removed, with-
 " out our withdrawing, ---- or is a thing to be condelcended on, forborn,
 " or forgiven: But shal study to maintain Union & Communion in Truth &
 " Duty, with all the Ministers and Members, of the said Church that do,
 " and in so far as they do follow the Institutions of Christ (As in *Artic.*
 " 2. §. 4. *Pag. 69.*) And in *Artic. 6. Pag. 71.* We engage that we
 " shall likewise desire, design and endeavour to get the defections, un-
 " worthy Neutralities, and unhappy divisions, that have long and La-
 " mentably wounded and wrecked the Church removed, Differences
 " settled and breaches healed, in such a way and upon such termes, as
 " may be Honorable and Advantageous for the Cause. And if our
 " Brethren and we, between whom such Differences have fallen in, and
 " have been sadly Fomented on all hands, will searh and try our ways
 " respectively, how far they and we have receded from the good old
 " way of the Church of Scotland. And in our impartial search shall find
 " out our respective defections, and breaches of Covenant, on the one
 " hand, and on the other, and unite in confessing these, by joyning, in this,
 " or the like Acknowledgement of publick Sins, and keeping dayes of
 " humiliation, and mourning for the same. And as we offer and pro-
 " mise to confess our Sins here acknowledged, or any other so far as
 " we can be convinced, any manner of way, that they shall desire or
 " appoint; So if they, at least will confess theirs Doctrinally, and they
 " and we both forsake them mutually, and forsaking concur in pro-
 " curing the Condemnation of them, in Ecclesiastick Synods or Assemb-
 " lies, and so return unto, and fix our ground on the old Established
 " foundations, according to the Word of God, and Constitutions of this
 " Church settled, before the Covenanted Reformation stopped, We
 " will then embrace and maintain Union and Communion with them
 " and submission to them in the Lord: And shall not suffer our selves,
 " Directly or indirectly, by whatsoever Combination perswasion or
 " terror

"terror, to be divided or withdrawn, from this blessed Union and
 "Conjunction. Thus far we advanced in these steps with one accord.

Thereafter, In the remembrance of these Resolutions and Engagements, which we looked upon, as at last inferring an obligation lying upon us, to make some Endeavours, in pursuance of this Union, which is a Duty, Materially, Morally, and Antecedently obliging in it self: Being invited also by some reverend Ministers in *Edinburgh*, we had once & again Conferences with them: Wherein at length after we had still insisted on the necessity of confessing and condemning these Defections and Corruptions, which caused us to stand so long at a distance from them, & proposed the Difficulties we had in our Conscience, to return to Communion with them before these were removed, as is said. They censed upon some Expedients for our satisfaction, that it should be allowed to us, to exhibit to the next Assembly, our Testimony against all these crimes and practices in Ministers, that did offend us, and to plead for recording of it, in the Books of Assembly, which might exoner our Consciences, and absolve us from all participation with, or Communion in the guilt, that we conceived to be in any of these things.

Wherenpon, taking this Condescension to further consideration (which indeed gave us more clearness than we had before) and declining any further procedure in it, until we consulted the mind of the People, whom we desired to be tender of, and guard against all appearance of imposing upon them, or overdriving them, unto things they could not be suddenly clear in. We had a Meeting with them, to deliberate upon this matter, at *Douglas*, wherein we proposed the Case, and offered several Considerations to bring things to a temper, endeavouring to satisfy and solve several Scruples and Objections, adduced by tender, zealous, and serious People, Alleging they could not have freedom or clearness to joyn with these Ministers, from whom they had formerly withdrawn, until they should acknowledge their defection, for without that, they could never be counted faithful, & would never faithfully urge others to confess their Sins, when they would not acknowledge their own: And that Union without this, would bury the Testimony against these defections. And several other difficulties of this nature, very weighty to them, and affecting to us. To all which we endeavoured to give solution, by shewing, That the not confessing of Sins, not in present practice, was never, and can never be owned by us, to be a ground of Separation; And that we found in Scripture, the Godly had Communion in Churches, where there were several Corruptions not confessed nor reformed. And that if the
 Church

Church came to recover Her Authority and Assemblies, we must submit, and unite in Reformation, and would not be required to unite in defection; telling them also of the forementioned Condescension, and of our purpose to give in Papers to the first Assembly. And perswading them, (tho we would not urge them against their Conscience, to hear all, or any of the Ministers, against whom there were greatest exceptions) to try and search through all the Country, where such might be had, that were most free of these offences, or most faithful in confessing them, and joyn with these, in the first place. In the mean time, because it was a grave and greatly important matter, not rashly to be determined, we agreed that a day of Humiliation should be set a part, for praying for Light in the case; And that the business should be suspended to another Meeting.

Thus the Matter was kept in suspense, for a considerable time; And in the mean while, we were now and then upon occasion, in conference, and sometimes in preaching, pleading for endeavours of Union; wherein perhaps our weakness, sometimes hath vented it self in expressions of too great fervor, to the offence of tender People; as formerly it might have its Eruptions, to the offence of others, in the prosecution of our differences with them. And it seems (tho the manner of managing a business, should not prejudice People against the matter it self, yet) several have been stumbled upon this. For at the next Meeting, at the foresaid place, some did move in the debate with more fervour, than before, against Union, except the foresaid defections were confessed. And other Objections and Scruples were adduced, both verbally and in Papers, sent from several Societies, bearing they could not return to a declining party, until they should return from their declinings; And that confession and forsaking of Sin, is so frequently inculcate in the Scriptures, that without this, they could not expect the blessing of God, upon the Ministry of those who retained and defended causes of wrath; And that the Church was not yet settled, and the Government not yet established, & so they could not tell, but their might be Corruptions in the very constitution of it. Whereunto we offered several Answers, and at the close of that Meeting, it was earnestly desired by the people & promised by us, that some thing should be write, and spread amongst them, that might inform them, and clear from the Scriptures, the difficulties of this controversie, & the necessity of *Union & Communion* with the Church in the present circumstances; Which accordingly so soon as was possible, was prepared, and may be hereafter published. Afterwards the business was more remissly

ally followed, both sides being more abstract, and kept in suspense, waiting to see the constitution of the Church established, and a free *General Assembly*, unto which they might make application, whence all expected more light and resolution would accrue. At length, the *General Assembly* indicted by Authority approaching, we had another Meeting, in which after some little debates, we came to a more sedate agreement, to apply to the *Assembly*, and that we should give in Papers to them: We told them that we had a mind, after exhibition of our *Testimony*, protesting against the Defections that offended us, to Submit and Unite; & persuaded them to do the like; But they were resolute to suspend offering Submission and Union, untill they should understand, what notice the *Assembly*, would take, and what use they would make, of our Papers. Upon this we concluded to give in our Papers, and agreed to set a part a day before the sitting of the *Assembly*, to pray for Counsel and Conduct from the Lord, in prosecution of this affair.

Before this time, tho we had in several places, and at several times given a Specimen of our inclinableness to *Union* and intense and impatient desire of Communion with our Brethren, in joyning with some, both in the North and South, to shew that we did not scruple now, to incorporate with them, when the grounds of Separation were taken away: Yet hitherto we suspended Submission and fixed Union, untill the Meeting of the *General Assembly*, both because, this was a matter proper for an *Assembly*, the differences concerned the whole Church, and could only be cognolced upon, and composed by an *Assembly*, and all the parties concerned in them, dispersed through a great part of the Church; could apply or answer to no Judicatory, inferiour to an *Assembly*, representing the whole; Therefore we thought it proper and expedient, to depositate our *Testimony* there, and so take occasion to make our *Union* as publick, as our division was: And indeed our intention to Address the *Assembly*, was almost as universally known, at least through the *West* and *South*, as our differences were, tho our design in the Address was unknown to many. For both in travelling through the Countrey towards *Edinburgh*, and when we came there, we found very many and multifarious opinions and reports of it: Some of a Malignant temper, telling that we were come to fire the *Assembly*, and create confusion among them: Others, that we had a mind to give in Papers declining their Authority, and protesting against their Constitution and Proceedings: Some alleaging little less, then we had got Gold from the *Jacobites* and *Prelatists*, to
 low

low discord among them: Others expressing their wishes and hopes that for our former Practises, and present Purposes and Papers, they should see us well paid home, and made to confels on our knees, our scandalous Schism, and to subject to the severity of Censure, when we had done all. Yea even among the best affected towards us, both Ministers and others, whom we consulted in the Affair, we found thō they had Charity for the design of the Workers, yet they had a great jealousy of the end of the work it self.

The *Assembly*, having sat several *Sessions*, our Paper, and the purpose of it, was motioned in the *Committee of Overtures*, before it was fully prepared; And the Motion favourably intertained by that Reverend Committee, they were pleased to appoint a Subcommittee of their Number to see it, and confer with us about the contents of it, who after hearing it read, did object little against the matter of it, but did urge the smoothing of it, and that we should take out some particulars, that might irritate and offend some, that would look upon themselves as injuriously reflected upon by them, which might provoke heats, and stop all other business, whence the Church might sustain great disadvantages, and our selves have little peace; We answered, we could not yeeld to the expunging of any particulars in it, which were matters of offence, and understood by us to be Corruptions, which our purpose was to witness against, without any design to irritate any by Reflections: And if any should be provoked to raise heats, we should be sorry for it, but we could not foresee how any could rise to that height, as to brake the *Assemblies* Harmony, since we were resolved to seek concord, and not Contention: And what ever they should do with the paper, if we might once have access to table it, our Contention would be at an end, for then our Testimony would be given in, and lye at their door, to be considered, as they should think fit, which would exoner our Conscience, and declare to them, as the Representatives of the Church, that our Communion with the Church at present, could not infer an approving of what we condemned before, nor a condemning of what we approved before. These things being favourably represented to the *Committee of Overtures*, they added some Reverend Brethren to the Subcommittee, to whom it was read a second time: They told us, they feared it would not be well received, and that it might have bad effects, if it should be read, but desired to know further what we resolved to do, if it should be rejected: We answered, we would still adhere to it, and could not change our Sentiments about the things contained therein; Yet because the things in Con-

troverſy, teſſified againſt in the paper, were not in the preſent Conſtitution of the Church, and therefore our *Submission* at preſent, could not be looked upon, to be an Homologation of the things therein witneſſed againſt; Therefore if we be allowed to exhibit our *Paper* to this venerable *Assembly*, we would ſtand to the *Union* and *Submission*, therein offered, let them diſpoſe of it as they will. They further deſired there might be a ſhort *Paper* drawn, to introduce the larger, ſhewing the ſcope of it, and our deſign in it: which we did, and therein made an offer and promiſe of *Union* and *Submission*, after the Exhibition of our foreſaid *Teſtimony*.

Theſe *Papers* both larger and ſhorter, being preſented to the *Committee of Overtures*: After ſome Debate, they condeſcended to hear both Read: which done, after our removal a little, The Moderator told us the Opinion of the *Committee*, *That they were ſenſible the large paper contained many ſad Truths in it, but upon ſeveral weighty Conſiderations did judge it in convenient to preſent it to the Aſſembly, becauſe of ſome Miſtakes, Reflections and Unſeaſonable and Unpracticable Overtures in it*: To this, we could accord, but urged the giving of it in; whereupon it was recommitted to the Subcommittee, with an addition of more Members, inſtructed to labour to perſwade uſt to liſt, and move no more in it. Their Endeavours and Arguments not prevailing with us, we were again called before the *Committee of Overtures*; And preſſed to condeſcend, and reſt content, that the *Papers* were exhibit to them, and read before them: We answered we could not, except the Reverend *Committee*, would aſſume to themſelves, or get devolved upon them, the power of the *Aſſembly*, to cognoſce on the matter, then we would liſt; Otherwiſe our buſineſs was with the *Aſſembly* and therefore we pleaded that the *Papers* might be tabled before them. Hereupon they Condeſcended to tranſmit them, with *Overtures* prepared concerning them, that we ſhould be received, that the *Large Paper* ſhould not be read, for ſeveral reaſons &c. Next day both *Papers* were exhibited in open *Aſſembly*, The ſhort *Paper* was read, with the *Overtures* of the *Committee* concerning the *Large* one. The matter coming to a vote, Some propoſed the State of it thus, *Read the Large Paper or not*; Others thus, *Approve the Overtures concerning it or not*. Its commonly believed the *Vote* went ſo, which hath ſtumbled many; we being removed knew not how it was expreſſed, but when ſome of us challenged it afterwards, as being very illegal, to vote a *Paper* ſhould not be read, for reaſons giving a Character, and Condemning the *Paper*, when the *Aſſembly* knew not what was in the *Paper*; a Reverend Miniſter and Member

Member of the *Assembly* assured us, that the vote did not go so; but that it was proposed in the last place, and Condescended to, that it should be voted thus, *Approve the first Overture*, (touching our being received) and the other (that the Paper should not be read) or not, without mentioning of the reasons. The whole *Assemblee* voted *Approve, Nemine contradicente*. We being again called before them, the *Moderator* exhorted us to *Order* and *Union*. To which one of our number made a short Reply, wishing the Venerable *Assembly* had thought it fit to read the Paper, but seeing it could not be obtained, such was our love to *Peace* and *Union*, that we would submit, but as to the reasons given for the not reading it, because of the Mistakes and Reflections in it, we were not conscious of any such thing: And desiring that it might be on Record, that such a Paper was exhibited, which accordingly was Minuted. There was only one more of us then present, who, after his Brother had concluded in a few words, offered to speak, and at greater length, to enlarge his Reply to some things expressed by the Reverend *Moderator* in his Exhortation. But it seems that some of the *Assembly* had a suspicion, that possibly he might, in his accustomed fervor, bring forth something, that might have been irritating: (which yet he was so far from designing, that he had resolved and premeditated, to say nothing, but what might corroborate & justify the *Union*, and to shew what were his Inducements to it, and how consistent it was with his former Principles and Practises:) For, when he offered to speak, the *Moderator*, and others also, requested him to forbear: Whereunto he yeilded, not at all suspecting or foreseeing that any would stumble at this ordinary piece of Discretion, at which we understand since, that some Friends have been offended, interpreting this Silence to have been a receding from our *Testimony*. But Truly, as he had intended not to have been silent, and if he had thought this could have been stumbling to any, would rather have ventured upon the censure of his Discourse, then to be so misconstrued for his silence: So, considering the *Assemblies* reiterate urging him to forbear, (by way of Request, not of Command) and how necessarie Condescension is in these Circumstantial of *Union*, what his Brother also had said before him, and how there was no other *Testimony* ever designed by us, but that in the Larger Paper exhibited in write, he did not think, he was called to contend for speaking any more at that time.

This is the true, short, and yet full *Narrative* of the whole Transaction which we thought needful to publish, in all the particulars of it, to discover the falshood of the various misreports industriously spread of it, by

those that envy the Union of Presbyterians, reflecting upon the Assembly, as well as reproaching us, and imposing upon the People, who are informed sometimes, that the Assembly carried very imperiously, in imposing upon us, as the condition of our being received, to confess on our knees, many Errors and Extravagances, in witnessing against these Courses, we called Corruptions, and to condemn and renounce all our Testimonies. And that we refused and receded from every point, for which we could contend with a great deal of clamor on the Hills, but had nothing to say when we came before the Assembly. And sometimes again, that we carried very insolently before them, and in our Paper upbraided the whole Assembly. And yet others interpret our condescending to the Assemblies, disposing of the Paper as abovesaid, to be a betraying and burying of it, and the Testimony that's in it, against the sins of the Land. To confute all which Calumnies, and to submit our Papers to the censure of all that will take notice of them, as we have offered them to the censure of the Church Representative, we shall here subjoin the Papers themselves.

The SHORT PAPER:

To the Moderator and Remanent Members of the General Assembly of this
 CHURCH.

With the greatest earnestness of longing we have desired, and yet with a patience perhaps to excess, we have waited for an Opportunity, to bring our unhappy Differences (of which, all Parties concerned are wearie) to a happy and holy close: And for this end to have access to apply our selves to a full and free General Assembly of this Church, invested with Authority and Power, in foro Divino & Humano, to determine and cognose upon them. The want of which an Assembly, constitute in that Vigor, to which through the Mercy of GOD, this Venerable National Synod hath arrived, hath been the great let and impediment of our composing the said Differences, in a way wherein not only we, but all of the same Sentiments would Acquiesce. Now having obtained this much longed, and long prayed for Priviledge, We cannot forbear any longer humbly, to Address this Venerable Assembly, with a free and ingenuous Representation of our Minds and Desires: The scope of which is to Represent those things, which have been most stumbling to us, for the Exoneration of our Consciences, And to declare our Design, after we have exhibited our Testimony against these Courses, which we understand to have been Corruptions and Defections in this Church, and laid it down at the Assemblies feet, to be disposed of, as their wisdom shall think fit,

fit, That we shall in all required Submission, subject our Selves, our Lives, and Doctrine, to the Cognizance of the Judicatories of this Church, and shall equally oppose Schism and Defection, in any Capacity, that we shall be found capable of. And here by these Presents, we bind and oblige our Selves, faithfully, to live in Union, and Communion, in true subjection, and due Obedience, in the LORD, to the Authority of this Church, in her Respective Judicatories; As witness our hands at Edinburgh.

Tho. Lining.
Al. Sheilds.
Will. Boyd

The L A R G E R P A P E R

To the Moderator and Remanent Members of the General Assembly, now
Convened at EDINBURGH.

The Humble Proposals of Mr. Thomas Lining, Mr. Alexander
Sheilds, and Mr. William Boyd.

IF our Eye could suitably affect our Hearts this day, Right Reverend, we might find much matter, both of Rejoycing and Mourning, in the wonderful Commencement and Advancement of this Work of Reformation. As at the Jews return from Babylon to Jerusalem, the Priests and Levites, and all the People shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the House of the LORD was laid; Yet some of them, that had seen the first House, wept with a loud voice, so that the People could not discern the noise of the shout of joy, from the noise of weeping. So at this time, we are called to rejoyce, with thanksgiving for, & we should indeed be very ungrate and unworthy, if we did not acknowledge with Praise and Admiration, the Mercy of God, which endureth for ever, manifested & magnified in the progress of this Work hitherto; That at the time appointed of God, the least expected by us, at the time of our greatest extremity, and our Enemies greatest insolency, the Lord hath been pleased in Sovereign Mercy, instead of overtaking us with judgements threatened for our sins, and without waiting on our Repentance and Preparations, by turning unto Him, to prevent and surprize us, not only, with an outward enlargement of Rest and Peace, without prejudice to Truth, in a way, wherein we are not beholden, to the ensnaring favours of his Enemies, but with such a reviving in our bondage (in the midst of Wrath remembering Mercy) brought about by the repression of Tyranny, suppression of Popery, and depression of Prelacy, as that we have yet a Nail in His Holy Place, to

set up the House of our GOD: Tea the Altar also is set again upon His Bases, and the daily burnt Offerings are offered by number, according to the custom, and the foundation of the Temple is laid again: When the Doctrine of this Church is asserted, and the Confession of Faith formerly received, is read, voted, approved, and established by Parliament, and even several controverted Truths formerly much condemned and obscured, under a load of many Calumnies, are now justified and vindicated; The Worship and Ordinances of Christ, are administered in great Purity, Plenty, and Peace; The Government of Christs Institution, by Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, so long born down, is at length restored to what it was Anno 1592. And all Acts & Laws contrary or prejudicial unto, inconsistent with, or derogatory from Presbyterial Government are rescinded, with this honour, that it is declared by Act of Parliament, that this is the Government most agreeable to the Word of GOD, and most conducing to the advancement of true Piety and Godliness, and establishment of Peace and Tranquillity within this Realm: And the Discipline retrieved to such a fond of Freedom, that all Ecclesiastick Courts, may without restraint, or being accountable to any Extortick Usurped Power in the Magistrate, assert all the Authority, and exercise the Power, wherewith Christ hath entrusted them. Which power if duly and diligently improved, and put in execution, may through the Blessing of GOD contribute very much to the reducing Order, & the redress of many Disorders in this Church. And now also the causes of our Disunion & Division in times of defection, being in a great measure removed, when Erastian Usurpations are abrogated, the Churches intrinsic Power reintegrated, and the Corruptions introduced by Compliances, so far abdicated and antiquated, that they are not in the constitution of the Church, and do not continue to be the scandal and snare of the times: We hope and expect a Remedy may be found for the Breaches and Divisions, that we thought incurable, and Union and communion in the Lord may be attained. But tho for these things we be called to rejoice, yet we are no less obliged to mourn, when we observe this House of the Lord, so unlike the former, wanting many things, the former had, and pestered with many things the former wanted. As at the building of the second House, after the Captivity of Babylon, they that had seen the first House wept with a loud voice, when they observed its Constitution and Structure, so far short of the former, for Order and Beauty, and wanting some glorious Prerogatives the other had: as the Urim and Thummim, the Fire from Heaven, the Ark of the Testimony, &c. So they that have seen our former Reformation in its Integrity, before the late Deformation, can hardly refrain from weeping at the sight of the sad disproportion, between this and the former. In the former, as the constitution was calculate in the nearest conformity to the Divine Pattern; so the Builders, had always a care to pull down what was to be demolished, before they established what

what was to stand, and to purge away the Rubbish from the Foundation, before they promoted the Superstructure: Accordingly when Prelacy was reintroduced at several times, the first thing they did when they recovered their power, was always to exert it in condemnation of that Corruption, and of these Assemblies and Meetings, that promoted, abetted, favoured, or complied. And when the Ecclesiastical Supremacy began to encroach upon the Churches Liberties, and to bring the Ministry into Bondage, they did not think it enough to wrestle against it by Personal witnessings, but by the good Hand of GOD upon their Endeavours, never ceased until it was condemned by Acts of Assembly. They proceeded also with great earnestness and vigilance, to purge the Church of corrupt and scandalous Ministers; sadly regretting afterwards, when they saw the effects of the continuance of some of that Character in the Ministry, that they had not done more in that purging work. But now, after all the Rubbish and Filth, brought into the House of GOD, by the Invasions and Usurpations of the Enemies, and Defections of Friends, when now Opportunity and Capacity is given to Rebuild and Beautifie the House of the LORD, and to Repair the Desolations thereof, the present building is so far advanced, without pulling down and purging away the Rubbish, and condemning these corruptions and defections, in compliance with them, or confessing and forsaking them, as our Fathers used to do. Now these courses have ~~more~~ rather left us, than we have forsaken; And the Lords returning in Providence, without our returning to Him by Repentance, hath made any Reformation yet attained, while these Defections are neither confessed in humiliations nor condemned in Judicatories. And the Prelatical Clergy, after all the evil they have done, and bitter fruits they have produced, are yet kept in many places, and like to continue as a Seminary and Nerserie of a corrupt Ministry. As long as all this Rubbish stands, there can be little hope, either of Purity or Stability in the Superstructure. In former Reformations also, the Advancement used to be Progressive, beginning where the former Reformation stooped, and going forward, after they had got removed, what obstructed it. But now the motion is Retrograde, going as far back, as that in 1592. missing many Excellent steps of Reformation, attained after that to 1649. In former Reformations, our worthy Ancestors used to begin with Renovation of the National Covenants, & Acknowledgements of the Breaches thereof, which hitherto hath been neglected, to the great grief of many. It is also matter of Lamentation to reflect, that in former Reformations, tho the Adversaries troubled the Builders, and hired Counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, yet being Furnished and Spirited of the Lord, for that Generation work, they never studied to please men, but to acquit themselves as faithful Servants of their Princely Master Jesus Christ, in witnessing against all Sins and Corruptions of great and small, impartially, and in Acts of Assembly ordaining and recommending to all Ministers,

this faithfulness in applying their Doctrine to the Sins of the time, under pain of
 Censure. But now there was never greater freedom and encouragement for, and
 necessity of faithfulness, where the Adversaries of Judah are seeking to Build, but
 on design to mar the Work, and many are too much inclining to joyn in affinity with
 the People of these abominations: Yet it is sadly wanting, and much Desiderated a-
 mong many Ministers, who being long accustomed to fears, and constrained silence,
 under former hazards and tentations have not yet recovered their Confidence and Cou-
 rage, to cry a loud against, and not spare the iniquities of the time. We desire also
 to joyn in that common request, that the former Reformation, this Church was not
 only for Order and Authority, beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and
 terrible as an army with banners, but for Union, got the Name of Philadelphia,
 being then as much admired for Unity, which is the fruit of Presbyterian Go-
 vernment, wherever it hath place, as for any other Priviledge, which rendered
 her the Envy of all the Nations about. Is now alas! The Crown hath fallen from
 our heads, we know we, that we have sinned. This Holy and Beautiful Fabrick,
 hath been burnt up, with the fire of Enemies fury, with the fire of our Divisions,
 and with the fire of the Lords indignation, burning against us for our defections,
 whereby the Lord was provoked to forsake his House, and since his departure, there
 hath been nothing but disorder among his Children and Servants. The Popish Pre-
 latial and Malignant Party, have come in by Force and Fraud, and by the Cedings
 of those, that should have stood in the Gap, and brake down the Carved Work of
 our Covenanted Reformation, as with Axes and Hammers, Rescinding all
 the Legal Duties of Ecclesiastical Constitutions, Civil Sanctions, and National
 Covenants, whereby that was sowed, wherein alas! They were too much encourag-
 ed by our faint resistance, and too universal involvement in the sin of submitting to &
 Countenancing of the intrusions of the Prelatical Party. At length having set up
 these their Ensigns for Signs, in Signs of complete Victory obtained over the Ser-
 vants and Subjects of our exalted Prince, after they have invaded His Kingdom
 and Palace, and made Havock and Slaughter of such, as would not yield, they
 offered some tempting terms, whereby they would suffer them to live in subjection to
 these Usurpations; painted indeed with pretences of Favour, but really, at least
 indirectly requiring a recognizance of the Usurpers power, and a Cessation from
 opposing the peaceable possession of their Robberies. These and the like defections on
 the one hand together with many Extravagances on the other, have brought the Godly
 into many confusions, stumbled them into many animosities, raked, rent, and almost
 ruined them with many Divisions; promoted too much on every hand, by Passion,
 Pride, Prejudice, Jealousie, too credulous and sedulous taking up and spreading re-
 ports, and reproaches one of another, whereby the Spirit of GOD hath been grieved;
 the Power, Practice, and Spiritual Exercise of Religion obstructed, the Gospels success
 marred

marred, the Ministrie and all Ordinances brought into contempt, ungodliness encouraged, the mouths of the ungodly opened, their hearts hardened, and their hands strengthened against us. And as the effect of all these, we may lament another sad and very sensible want, the Lords Power and Glory not seen in the Sanctuary, as sometimes in the former House it was, with a speciality of brightness; And the Spirit of Grace and Supplication, Repentance, and Reformation, publick Zeal for the Interest of Christ, and the Gospel Spirit of Love and Tenderneſs towards Brethren, is not yet poured from on high. But it may be, if the Tabernacle were once reared up, that the cloud of the LORDS Presence would cover it, and the Glorie of the LORD would fill it: And if we were ashamed of our iniquities, we might then measure the Pattern, and see the form of the House, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the Ordinances thereof, and the whole limit thereof should be holy, which is the Law of the House: Then the glorie of this latter House should be greater than of the former.

Nevertheless, We are so far from despising the day of small things, that in weakness and humilitie, we would desire to say, it is our highest ambition to enjoy the Communion of this Sanctuary of the LORD, in this Land, if it were but to be Door-keepers in the House of our GOD: And it is the matter of our greatest longing to see the day, when all the Dissident and long Dissevered Children of Zion, shal together with one heart take their Mother by the Hand, and with one Lip praise their Father, in the Beautie of Holiness. For when the Courts of the LORD are amiable in Order, it cannot but be pleasant and desireable for Brethren to dwell together in Unitie; And so much the more, that we have felt the sad effects of our unhappie Divisions, which not onlie now, but even in their greatest heat, made us with much longing, desire and pray for a comfortable Union, and to bemoan the Causes and Effects of the delays of it; upon all occasions declaring our dread and detestation of Schism, as a very heinous, hurtful and hateful sin. We did indeed demure to concur with and follow, and did think it our dutie, pro tempore, to withdraw from these Ministers (tho still we owned and esteemed them as godlie Ministers of this Church) who promoted courses of defection after specified; and to adhere to those (tho but few) who were more stedfast and faithful, in that time of Divisions, Confusions, and abounding snares, when the Church was in a broken state, deprived of the Remedie of Church Judicatories, whereunto we might recurr with Complaints and Supplications, for removing these Offences: And when the Government was so Tyrannical, that if there had been Church Judicatories, neither durst, they have corresponded with us, nor we make Application to them, for hazard of our Lives. When also the case was so stated, that we thought communion could not be kept by us with them, from whom we withdrew without sin, while the very exercise of their Ministrie, in the then circumstances, was so far depending upon, subordinate unto, complying with, modified and authorised by, unlawful Usurpations,

tions, that our joining would have inferred, at least in our conscience, a submission to, symbolizing with, and approving of their offensive yieldings to these encroachments. Yet we never thought this a Schism; We never judged it, to be a separation from the Church of Scotland, either in Her Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, or Government, as it stood Reformed and Covenanted to be preserved; Nor did we gather, or set up formed separate Churches or Societies, under another Government or Ministrie, distinct from, and independent upon the Presbyterial Church of Scotland; nor did we ever maintain, but alwayes abhorred that Sectarian notion, that the Personal Sins and Scandalls of Fellow-worshippers, Ministers or Professors, did pollute the Ordinances; nor did we ever owne, but alwayes disowned, a positive or active, total or stated Separation, from all the Ministry, or from any, for any Offence, in any case, where either the Offence could be then legally removed, or was in it self a thing to be condescended upon, or forborn, or did not hazard our Involvement in the sin of it: And only for the time, owned a Negative, Passive, and Conditional Abstraction from some, refusing to follow the Backsliding part of the Ministry, in their courses of Defection, and choosing to abide by that Part that persevered in their Integrity. But now that Tyranny, that chased us from one another, being through Mercy removed, and these Snarers and Stumbling-blocks, which scared us, from Communion with many, being so far taken out of the way, that they cease to be Tentations involving us in sin, and bones of Contention engaging us in continual janglings about them: Church judicatories being now in capacity, to give some remedy to these Evils, since Providence also hath so far altered the case, and matter of our Contendings, for the Faith delivered to the Saints, that it calls all dissentient Parties, among Presbyterians, to concenter in one common Testimony, for the common Reformation, against the common Adversaries. We hope this much desired and long looked for Union, is, and shall be more accessable and attainable: Therefore, to the end, that this happy and desirable Union, may be Holy and Comfortable, in a way that may procure, and secure our Union and Communion with the LORD: And as the famous Victorius says, Ut nihil de veritate & professione nostra remittamus atq; ad eo à perfectione ad quam cum DEO pervenimus non relabamur ad imperfectionem. Considering in all the Periods of this Church, from her first Reformation, a Witness hath never been wanting, against the same, or equivalent Corruptions, that have offended us: And no method can be more adapted, for recovering and restoring Union, than that which was used, for preserving it: And that having aimed hitherto, to offer & keep up our Mite of a Testimony, tho weak & insignificant, against the same; if now under the convictions of its remaining righteousness, we shall pass from it, & so seem to condemn what we approved before, & approve what we condemned before, it will leave an indeleble reproach, not only on our selves, but on our Contendings and Sufferings. Because likewise in a Conference with some Re-
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rend Brethren, and Members of this Assembly, about these things it was proposed and conceded, as an expedient, for easing our Consciences, that we should have liberty to remonstrate and represent, to the Assembly, what was offensive to us. We earnestly desire, Right Reverend, you would be pleased to condescend to us, in some things, that we humbly conceive, are very needful, just to be sought, and easie to be granted. We know and are confident, your Zeal for Truth and Peace, will suggest the same means and measures, for obtaining this end, and will urge you to take notice of the same things, we desire without our advertisement: Nor do we take upon us to prescribe the Methods, Terms or Conditions, necessary for Composing these unhappy Differences, and restoring the holy and happy Union in the Lord; But we think, the Word and Works of God this day, points at these, which we crave leave in the Bowels of Christ, to remonstrate unto your serious Consideration.

That to the end the causes of our Divisions, the Anger of the Lord, as the Holy Cause, and our Mutual offences, as the sinful Cause, May be removed, that the effect may cease, a Mutual, impartial, and accurate search and trial may be made into our wayes, to find out, and remember from whence we are fallen, and discover our manifold and manifest defections, from the right wayes of the Lord; That the great wrongs and indignities done to our Great Head and King, by Enemies Encroachments on his Prerogatives, and his Kingdoms Liberties, and our Compliances therewith, on the one hand and one the other, may not be past in oblivion, but diligently inquired into, and what accession to them, or Participation with them, all of us have been involved in, these 30. years bygone: Particularly that it be laid to Heart, what Indignity to the Lord Jesus, and Injury to his Church, was done by the introduction of abjured, Diocesan and Erastian Prelacy, and the several degrees of Compliance therewith; As Ministers leaving their Pastoral Charge, at the Command of the Magistrate, and laying aside the Exercise of their Ministry, giving way unto, and not testifying against the Intrusions of Prelatick Curats; Particularly owning & submitting to their Ministry, & receiving ordinances dispensed by them, and by Counsel and Example, Encouraging others to do the like: Which we cannot but Plead and Protest against as sinful and Scandalous. 1. Because they were, and are manifest Intruders, not entering in at the door, in the way and order of Christ, not having, yea despising and renouncing a Call from the People, and Ordination by the Presbytrie, and having no other external Call, Authority or Right to officiate in this Church, as its proper Pastors, but the Collation of Bishops, and Presentation of Patrons, who are none of Christs Officers, and foresauling and foregoing any other Right, that any of them formerly could pretend to, by palpable defection to the Enemies of this Church. 2. Because both in Principle and Profession, and in the way of their Entry unto their Pastoral Charge, they

were, and are Erastians, deriving their Power from, and subjecting it in its exercise to another Head then Christ, the Magistrates Supremacy by which only they were Authorized, without Christs warrant, or the Churches consent. 3. Because they were, and are Schismatics, who caused Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine of this Church, breaking her Union and Order, going out themselves from the fellowship of this Church, and leading People away from her unwed Reformation; yea who violently thrust out, and persecuted her faithful Pastors and Children, for adhering to that Reformation, which they designed to raze and ruine. 4. Because they were, and are perjured Covenant-breakers, avowedly disowning our Covenants, and stated in opposition to that Reformation, which is therein sworn to be maintained. 5. Because they were, & are in several Points Erroneous, in their Doctrine, many of them tainted with the Leaven of Popery, Arminianism, and Socinianism, & all of them Heterodox, in the point of the Magistrates power in Church matters, in the matter of Oaths, and in condemning the Work of our Reformation, and Covenants; seducing thereby their Hearers, and both positively by these Doctrines, & privatively by withholding other necessary Instructions, and Warnings, Murdering their Souls. 6. Because they were, and are upon all these Accounts Scandalous, and the Objects of the Churches Censure: And tho' through the iniquity of the times, their deserved Censure, hitherto hath not been inflicted, yet they stand upon the matter convicted, by clear Scripture Grounds, and by the standing Acts, and judicial Decision of this Church, in her Supreme Judicatories. 7. Because this bearing and sumitting to them, was required as a Badge, Test, and Evidence of Due Acknowledgement of, and hearty Compylance with Erastianism and Prelacy, or His Majesties Government Ecclesiastick, Act. Parl. 1. Char. 2. July 10. 1663. which made it a case of Confession to withstand it. 8. Because by our Covenants, we are obliged to stand at a distance, from such courses of Defection, and to extirpate them; yet in contradiction hereunto, we were commanded by the Rescinders of the Covenants, to bear the Prelatick Curats, as a Badge of our yeilding to the rescinding of the Covenants. 9. Because this Course was Offensive and Stumbling, both in hardening those that complied with Prelacy, and weakening the Hands of those that opposed it, and inferred a condemning of their Sufferings upon this Head. Especially, 10. When Communion with them was so stated, that therein was not only a Case of Controversie among the Godly, in which alwayes Abstinence is the surest side, nor only in the judgement of many a Case of Confession, which is alwayes dangerous to contradict and condemn, but undenyably a Case of Competition, between the true Church of Scotland, her Ministers and Professors, owning and adbering to her Holy Establishments, claiming a Divine Right to their Offices and Priviledges, contending for the Churches Reformation; and a Schismatical Party, setting up a new Church, in a new Order, under

der a new Head, robbing them of their Offices and Priviledges, and overturning the Reformation.

We must presume to Plead also, That Enquiry be made unto the Heinous and Heaven-daring Affront, done to the Holiness of GOD, in the horrid Violations of our Holy Covenants, National and Solemn League, not only how the Popish, Prelatical, and Malignant Party, have broken them, enacted the Breaches of them, by Law, Burnt them, and endeavoured to Bury them, by making it a Capital Crime to owne their Obligation, and by bringing in and substituting in their room, Conscience ensnaring Anti-covenants, Oaths, Bonds, and Engagements renouncing the former, and obliging to Courses contradictory thereunto: But that it may be considered, how many wayer, Ministers and Professors, in this time of temptation and tribulation, have been guilty of breach of these holy Covenants: particularly by consenting unto, subscribing, swearing, and taking any of the new multiplied, mischievously contrived, captiously conceived, and Tyrannically imposed Oaths, Tests, or Bonds, in matters of Religion, since the overturning of the Covenanted Reformation, and establishment of Prelacy; and by perswading People to take them, and forbearing a necessary warning of the danger of them, and leaving People in the dark, to determine themselves, in the midst of these snares. All which we Plead and Protest, against as sinful and scandalous. (1) Because all of them, did infer, import, and imply a sinful unitive conjunction, Incorporation, Association, and Confederacy, with the People of these Abominations, that were promoting a course of Apostasie from GOD. (2) Because all of them were incapable of the Qualifications, required in Sacred Engagements, to be taken in Truth, Righteousness, and Judgement. (3) Because all of them, in the sense of the Imposers, interpreted by their A^ct^s and A^ct^gs, were condemnatory of, and contradictory unto the Covenants, & some part of the Covenanted Reformation. (4) Because by the Ancient A^ct^s of Assembly, all publick Oaths imposed by the Malignant Party, without consent of the Church are condemned. July 28. 1648. Ante merid. Sess. 18. And

“ Those Ministers are Ordained to be Censured, who subscribe any Bonds, or
 “ take any Oaths, not approven by the General Assembly, or by their Counsel,
 “ Countenance, or Approbation, make themselves accessory to the taking of such Bonds
 “ and Oaths.

In like manner we dare not forbear to Cry and Crave, that it may be considered, what wrongs Christ hath received from the Erastian and Antichristian Usurpation of the Supremacy, encroaching upon the Prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ his incommunicable Headship and Kingship, as Mediator, giving to a Man, a Magisterial, and Architectionick power, to alter and innovate, Authorise and Ex-auctorate, allow or restrain, and dispose of the Government and Governours of the Church, according to his pleasure; invading the liberties of the Gospel Church, in-
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introducing a civil Dominion upon her Government, contrare to its nature, being only a Ministerial Stewardship, distinct from the Civil Government, in its Nature, Causes, Ends, Officers, and Actions, and giving to the Magistrate the power of the keys, without and against Christs Donation and Authority; even the Dogmatick, Critick, and Diatactick, Decisive Suffrage, and Power, in Causes Ecclesiastick, which Christ hath intrusted to the Church Representatives; and denying to the Church, the Exercise of these Keyes and Powers, without the Magistrates warrand and Indulgence. We crave also, that it may be inquired into, how far this encroachment, hath been connived at, submitted unto, complied with, homologate, strengthened and established, by receiving and accepting, without consent of the Church, yea against the express dissent, and testimony of some faithfull Ministers, to the contrare, the Indulgences, anno 1669, and 1679: And by the silence of others, not witnessing against the same, and others censuring the Faithful, for discovering the sinfulness thereof. Which we Remonstrate upon these grounds complexly considered. (1) Because as the contrivance and end of the grant thereof, was to advance and establish the Supremacy; to engage Presbyterians, either to co-operate towards the settling and strengthening thereof, or to surcease from opposing the peaceable possession of the Granters Usurpation, and to extort from them, at least an indirect Recognizance, of acknowledged Subordination in Ministerial Exercises, to his usurped power, in a way which would be best acquiesced in; To suppress the Preaching and Propagation of the Gospel in persecuted Meetings in houses and fields, so necessary at that time; and to divide and increase differences and animosities among Presbyterians, by insinuating upon these called the more Moderate, to commend the Indulger his Clemency, while other Non-Conformists, adhering to interdicted duties, were justly complaining of the Effects of his Severity. And as the woful effects of it, strengthening the Supremacy, weakening the hands of these that witnessed against it, extinguishing Zeal, and increasing many divisions, did correspond with these wretched designs; So these could not be counteracted, but very much strengthened and promoted, by the Acceptance of the Indulgence, which in its own nature, was so palpably subservient thereto, even tho there had been a Testimonie against these designs and ends, yet when the means adapted to these ends, were complied with, it was rendered irrite and contra factum. (2) Because as the Supremacie received much Strength and Increment from the Indulgence, so reciprocally it had its Rise, Spring, Conveyance, and subsistence from the Supremacy; from which it flowed, upon which it stood, and by which at length it was removed: And in the grant and conveyance of the Indulgence, all the power of the Supremacy, was arrogate, asserted and exerted, in first taking away the power of the Keyes, from CHRISTs Stewards, and then restoring only one of them, to some few, with Restrictions bounding, and Instructions regulat-

regulating them in the exercise of that. The Acceptance whereof, so clogged with these complex Circumstances, without a clear & distinct Testimony, in that case of confession, hath at least a great appearance (which should have been abstained from) of a conniving at, submitting unto, complying with, and homologating of that Erastian Usurpation. (3) Because, as it was interpreted to be accepted in the same Terms, wherein it was granted, without a Testimony against the Supremacy, so the Entry of those Ministers to their Churches, by this Indulgence, was prejudicial to the Churches Priviledge: Some of them being fixed in particular Churches, whereunto they had no peculiar Pastoral Relation before, and some transplanted from one Church to another, without the interposure of any Ecclesiastick Presbyterial Authority, without the free and orderly Call of the People, being in many respects prelimited, and in the way of Patronages, at the Councils Pleasure and Order; and those that were Restored to their own Churches, being there admitted, not by virtue of their Old Right, and claim of an undissolved Relation, but by virtue of a New Holding on the Indulgence. (4) Because the embracing thereof, and the continuing therein, was a faint yielding to prevailing Erastianism, & a course of Defection from former Integrity of Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness, in which the Servants and Witnesses of Jesus Christ, were Famous and Eminent in former times, who for writing, Preaching, and protesting against the Ecclesiastick Supremacy, in the Magistracy, and all Erastian courses, did bear the cross of Christ, with much steadfastness; Yea a receding from, and foregoing of a very material part of the Cause and Testimonie of the Church of Scotland, which till then, did constantlie wrestle against such encroachments: And in this respect scandalous, because hardening to Erastian Enemies, stumbling to many Friends, and offensive to Posteritie. (5) Because it is contradictorie to our Covenants, to receive Indulgences, contrived and conferred on purpose, to divide (by the terror of persecution on the one hand, and the perswasion of this pretended Libertie, taking off the Legal restraint on the other) Ministers & People from the Cause and Testimony of the Church of Scotland, against the Supremacy, & from their former blessed Conjunction therein, and to induce them to make Defection to that Party, that were Advancing Erastianism. And it is expressly contradictorie to the Engagement to Duties, Anno 1649, where the Obligation bears, "Because many have of late laboured, to supplant the Liberties of the Kirk, we shall Maintain and Defend the Kirk of Scotland, in all her Liberties and Priviledges, against all who shall oppose or undermine the same, or encroach thereupon under any pretext whatsoever."

Likewise, we Plead and Obtest, that a Search may be made into, and a review taken of the late Toleration, the Addressing for it, and Acceptance of it, complexely considered: The sinfulness whereof, we could not, and now cannot forbear

10 Witnesses against. (1) Because at the Design of the Granter, and Tendency of the Grant it self, in its own nature, being the Introduction of Popery and Slavery, could not in any probability be counteracted, but rather corroborated, by this Addressing for it, and Accepting of it, even tho there had been a Testimony against the design thereof, as there was none, and could be none consistent with the continuance thereof, so being conveyed from Absolute Power, which all were required to obey without reserve, Stopping, Suspending, and Disabling all the Penal Statutes, against Papists, thereby undermining all the Legal Bulwark of our Religion: The Addressing for, and Accepting of it, so conveyed, without a witness against this Despotical Encroachment (yea the very condition of enjoying the benefit of it, being exclusive of such a Testimony, which might any way tend, to the alienating of the People from such a despotical Government, in all its Encroachments) did indirectly, at least, imply Compliance with, if not the Recognizance and Acknowledgement of that Usurped Power, and the Arbitrary Exercise and Effect of it in suspending the Penal Statutes. (2) Because it was extended, not only to Prelacy, but to Popery, Quakerism, and all Idolatry, Blasphemy, and Heresie, which was highly provoking to the Lord Jesus, and prejudicial to the Peace and Purity of His Church; contrary to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; contrary to our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, Chap. 20. S. 4. and Chap. 23. S. 3. Being placed also among the sins of the second Command, in the Larger Catechism; contrary to the Principles of the Church of Scotland, being condemned, warned of, and witnessed against, by Acts of Assembly, anno 1649. And by her faithful Pastors Preaching, Writing, and Protesting against such Tolerations, (and sometimes, even when Papists were excluded, as then, against which the Ministers of Fife and Perth did testify) And contrary to our Covenants, wherein we are bound to preserve Reformation and Uniformity, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government, to extirpate Popery, &c. to free our Souls from the guilt of other Mens Sins, defend our Liberties, and consequently never to comply with a Toleration, ever since of all these Interests we are sworn to maintain, and introductive of these things, we are sworn to endeavour the Extirpation of. (3) Because it was clogged with such Conditions and Limitations, as did exceedingly hamper the Freedom of the Ministry, being Offered (in Proclamations) and Accepted (in Addresses and Obedience) with Restrictions to Persons, who might Preach, (allowing some, and discharging others, who had as good Authority, as they, to exercise their Ministry) To Places where they should preach (only where Intimation was given of the Name of the Place, and of the Preacher, to some of the Lords of the Council, &c.) And to the matter What, or at least what they might not preach, to wit, nothing that might have any tendency, to alienate the Hearts of the People from a Popish and Tyranical Government, and consequently nothing against the wicked,

wickedness, or of the Misery of Tyranny; nothing against the Toleration, and the open Sins proclaimed therein, and wicked Ends designed thereby; nothing against disabling the Penal Statutes, or for the Obligation of them, and Ties of National Covenants strengthening them. (4) Because of the manifold Scandal of it, we cannot but witness against it, being so disgraceful to the Protestant Religion, and prejudicial to the Interest thereof. It was reproachful to our Religion, sometimes established by Law, then only Tolerate, under the Notion of an Evil to be suffered; How Confounding and Consternating was this, to all the Reformed Churches, that sometimes admired and envied Scotland's Establishments, now to see her so dispirited and deceived, as to Accept and Address for a Toleration, without a Testimony, whereby instead of all the Laws and Covenants securing her Reformation, the only Tenure and Security for it, she had now remaining, was, the Arbitrary Word of an Absolute Prince, whose Principles obliged him to break it? What occasion of disdainful Insulting, did it give to the Prelatical Party, then Pleading for the Nations Laws, to observe Presbyterians, acquiescing in that which suspended and stopped the Penal Statutes? Yea, what matter of Gloriation, and Boasting was it to Papists, to see Presbyterians sleeping and succumbing, and not opposing, when at this opened Gap, they were bringing in the Trojan Horse of Popery and Slavery?

Moreover with respect to some things at present, which we account Corruptions, and are offensive to many, we cannot forbear to Remonstrate and Plead, that Consideration may be taken, of the sinfulness of the too universal Defect and Neglect, of Zeal and Faithfulness, in reviving the buried National Covenants, when now they seem to be laid aside, and many Ministers, forbear to Preach plainly the obligation of them, and discover particularly, the Breaches of them, and mention them in Engagements, which they require of Parents, when they present their Children to Baptisme, according to the continued Custom of faithful Ministers, these many years bygone: And it is stumbling to many, that in all Addresses to King and Parliament, the Renewing of them hath not been desired. This we think very grievous (1) Because in the Scriptures, as we have many Precepts, Promises, and Precedents for Renewing them, and Demonstrations of their Perpetual, indissoluble obligation being in their matter and forme agreeable with the Word of God; So we have many Demunciations and Certifications of unavoidable threatenings of all evils; National, Personal, Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal, against forsaking or forgetting them. (2) Because as there is no other way to prevent the Curse of the Covenants, and this threatened wrath imminent upon the Land, for breach of Covenants, but to acknowledge the breaches of them, and engage again to the Duties of them; So these omissions, cannot consist with that faithfulness, required of Ministers in such a Case. (3) Because it is a plain defection from first love, and former Attainments of our Fathers, who

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commenced all Reformati^ons, with Renovations of the Covenants: And in their Ecclesiastick Constituti^ons, enjoyned to all Ministers, to Preach up the Covenants, & Witness against all defections from them, and indifferency or Luke-warmness in them, which also is a breach of Covenant in it self.

Hence more Particularly, we cannot but signify how much, we and many others are offended, at the too general keeping silence at, or very ambiguous speaking against, and omitting the plain and Impartial Doctrinal Rebuking of such Crying sins and scandalls of the times, as cannot be Controverted among Presbyterians; Such as the imposing and taking many Bonds and Oaths, repugnant to the Covenants and work of Reformation, which many Complied with to shift Persecution, and many others to Purchase preferments unto places of Trust; The accession of Nobles & Rulers to the wicked establishments and framing mischiefs into Laws in former times; The manifold involvements of great and small, in the guilt of Persecution, by delating and informing against honest suffering People, Riding with Armed Force, to pursue and Apprehend them, appearing under displayed Banners for the defence of Tyranny, on Expeditions against them, at Pentland, Bothwel-Bridge, &c. Sitting in Courts Juries and Assyses, to condemn them, putting them out of Houses & Tenements under them, because they would not Comply with sinful impositions: And especially the defying of the Lord with Blood, which hath yet a Cry in the Ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth: All which the Servants of the Lord, are obliged by the Word of God, and the Constituti^ons of this Church, to Cry against, and not to spare, and to reprove and rebuke in Season and out of Season.

Finally, we must presume, to lay open our own, and the general Complaints, through several corners of the Land, of the sad Slackness and Remissness of Discipline: The Report and Fama Clomosa whereof, at least doth wound our Ears, and pierce our Hearts; To wit, That some who had gone a great length in the above-mentioned Compliances, even to the Swearing the Test it self, besides other wicked Oaths, and to the persecuting of the Godly sundry wayes, are admitted to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and to present their Children to Baptism: And that others, are admitted to the Charge of Elders, who had not only habitually complied with Prelacy, and had born the Name of that Office under that Government, but had taken these scandalous forementioned Oaths; yea and that of late, some are admitted to the Ministry, that constantly followed Episcopacy, and were trained up to be Curats, and were deeply involved in the foresaid Compliances, without due Trial of their past Conversation, and requiring of their publick Profession of Repentance, and Resentment of these respective Scandals; whereby the Precious are not taken from the Vile, and a little of that old Leaven, may quickly leaven the whole Lump, and Offenders are not like thereby to be gained to Repentance, but rather hardened in, and tempted to think little of these destroying Sins.

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We plead not here, that every one of the defects, or every degree of these offences, should be in the case of this Epidemick Involvement, proceeded against by disciplinary Censure, nor do we urge, that all chargable with these offences above taxed, especially such as are in Controversie, should be either Personally rebuked in publick, or obliged publickly to confess their own degree of the guilt of them, tho it would give glory to God, and Comfort to the Church, and peace to their own Consciences, for all to confess their offences, that have been most stumbling to the Godly, so far as from the Word of God, and known Principles of this Reformed Church, they may be convinced. Nor do we propose, that the condemnation of every one of these steps of defection, that are questioned, should be so far stretched quoad momentum rei, as either to be stated by us, as a ground of Separation formerly, or now required as a necessary condition of Communion; Tho still, we conceive the complication of them together, when they stood, was a ground that necessitated our withdrawing, from many in the then Circumstances. We only desire, they may be so far inquired into, that what guilt is in them, before the Lord, may be in some measure discovered, and the wrongs done to Christ thereby, may not be passed over in an Act of oblivion: But as the Right honourable the Estates of Parliament, have found & declared, these Acts, & Actings of the Overturers of our Reformation; and the mischiefs of Prelacy, Supremacy, & Tyranny, established by wicked Laws which were the Foundations and Fountains of all the Offenceful Compliances abovementioned, to be Grievances against the Laws of the Land; So the Right Reverend, the Members of this Venerable Assembly, may find and declare, these wicked establishments and Compliances Supporting them, and defections flowing therefrom, to be sins against the Laws of Christ; And so far as they can find Iniquity in the foresaid offences, may provide by Ecclesiastick Constitutions, for the future, that the like Compliances, with the like Contrivances of usurping Enemies, may never again be allowed, under pain of Church Censures, to prevent and preclude all fears of divisions, to be occasioned by the like defections, in time coming. And as we offer and Promise, so far as we are, or may be convinced, to confess our offences, any manner of way, that Church Judicatories shall appoint; So, for the satisfaction of all concerned in the late Differences, and removal of Offenses, given or taken, we desire and expect, that such Failings in the above specified particulars, or others be laid to Heart, by all sorts of Ministers and Preachers, as they are convinced of, or after search, may be discovered to them, by this Reverend Assembly: And that these, among the Sins of the Land, be set down in order, as causes of a publick Fast, upon some week day, through all the Meetings of Presbyterians, within this Kingdom, and that the Sins of the People be intermixed among these Causes.

Further, As we humbly conceive, it would prove a very proper and promising expedient, for promoting, preserving and propagating Reformation, for settling

ing and keeping Order and Union, for preventing and precluding innovations or corruptions, for discovering and discouraging Apostates or Schismatics, Malignants or Sectaries, and excluding them from access to do further hurt; so we hope, we shall be approv'd and seconded by many in this Reverend Assembly, in craving the Renewing of the Covenants, either both the National, and Solemn League, with accommodations to our Times, or one made up of both, with Additions or Explications, suiting our present Case and Day, with a Solemn Acknowledgement of the publick Breaches, and Engagement to the Duties of the Covenants: Humbly moving, that none be forced to Swear or Subscribe the same, or so much as admitted to it, except they be such, as may be judged in Charity, to have a competent knowledge, and sense of the Sins and Duties thereof.

In Fine, tho we will not take upon us, to propose the time or the way, of purging out the Episcopal Clergy, yet we cannot and dare not forbear, to Plead and Obtest that they may not be continued, nor kept in the Churches, whereunto they have intruded, nor re-admitted that are, or may be laid aside, until they give approvable evidence of their Repentance, for their sinful Conformity. (1) Upon all these Grounds, exhibited above, against bearing of them. (2) Because, former experience of the hurt received by the entertainment of the Episcopal Clergy, anno 1638, does now plead for their care to prevent it in time coming. (3) Because the People under their Ministry, have hitherto been, and are perishing in Ignorance and Irreligion, being either starved for want of Faithful and Spiritual Instruction, or poisoned with false Instruction; and therefore Pity to them, and Zeal to propagate the Gospel, should prompt to all endeavours, to purge them out. (4) Because, the Settlement, Purgation, and Plantation of the Church, will be exceedingly obstructed, by the continuance of them, that unsettled it, corrupted it, and pestered the Lords Vineyard, with Plants not of His planting, and whose Leaven will be alwayes in hazard to leaven the whole Lump. (5) Because, all of them are among these, whom the Laws of Christ do oblige, the Constitutions of this Church do ordain, and the present Civil Sanctions, for establishing Church Government do allow the Church Representative, to try and purge out, being all of them either insufficient, or negligent, or erroneous, or scandalous, if these Characters may be applied, or interpreted, according to Scripture Rules, or as the Church hath extended them heretofore. We are content that none of the Curats, be put out, but the insufficient & Ignorant, if this be one part of the trial of their knowledge, to inquire not only unto their Gifts but their Graces, if ignorance of Conversion, Regeneration, Sanctification, and Communion with God; both as to the Doctrine of these Benefits, and as to their own Experience of them, so far as may be discovered by humane Judgement, be reputed insufficiency; We are content, none be put away, but the negligent, if so be they that do not warn the Wicked of their destroying Sins, that feed themselves and not the Flock, that do not
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strengthen the Diseased, nor heal the Sick, &c. --- That omit the pressing of necessary Duties impartially on Persons and Families, and the censuring of Scandals, without respect of Persons, be comprehended in that Character: We are satisfied, none be removed but the Erroneous, if they be judged to be such, who not only owe Points of Popery, Arminianism, and Socinianism, but are unsound in their Explanation of the Kingly Office of Christ, of the Perfection of the Scriptures in the point of Church Officers and Government, in the matter of Oaths, & of the Magistrates Power, and do maintain Erastianism, an exploded and abjured Error in this Church: And we seek no more but that all be removed who are Scandalous, and none but they, if Intruders, Covenant-breakers, perjured Subscribers of Scandalous Oaths and Tests, Schismaticks, and Persecuters, be counted among the Scandalous.

It were perhaps, Right Reverend, more suitable for us, who make so mean a Figure, among either Preachers or Professors, to lay our Hand on our Mouth, in submissive silence, waiting what your own Wisdom and Zeal will produce by the good Hand of GOD upon you, for our satisfaction: But conceiving a chief Let and Impediment of our desired comfort of Union, to consist in the want of opportunity, of laying open our Hearts to you, and longing with much impatience for it, we could not forbear any longer, giving you the trouble of hearing us, wherein we request, for the favour of laying aside all preconceived Prejudices, and beg rather your charitable construction of our ingenuous Freedom, and deprecate your critical scanning the Infirmities, that may be obvious therein. Some things are indeed extraordinary, which we here urge, but as extraordinary Exigences do force us, to move without a Precedent, so they furnish you a Power, to make a Precedent for the like cases, thereafter: We confess also, it may seem precipitant to press all these things so hard, & so soon, in a bruckle time, before things be better settled; but we fear if new delays be procured till all things be fully settled, that the observing of Wind and Clouds shall hinder both Sowing and Reaping. But if laying aside the Plaisters, wherewith the Wounds of our Backslidings have been slightly covered rather than cured, you put to your Hand to the healing of our Breaches, in condescending to these our humble Desires, you shall win the Blessing of many Souls, rent and racked with these Divisions; You shall disburden the Land of many weights and woes, whereof it is weary, you shall send to all the Neighbouring Churches a Pattern, transmit to the Posterity an Example, and Erect to all Ages a Monument of self-denying, Zeal and Wisdom; a work to be paralleled with the Glories of former times. If herein our hopes shall fail us, we shall not know whether to wish, we had died with our Brethren, by the Enemies hand, and had never seen this Reviving in our Bondage, for it will be a death to us, and not a reviving, if there be not a returning together to the LORD, searching and trying and discovering the iniquities of our ways. But however, we intend not to separat from the Church, but to maintain

maintain Union and Communion, in Truth and Duty, with all the Ministers and Members of this Church; that do, and in so far as they do follow the Institutions of Christ, and to approve our selves, GOD assisting, as much for Peace and Concord, as ever we were suspected to be Men of divisive Principles; hoping it shall appear, we are seeking where He feedeth, and where He makes His Flock to rest at noon, and are not as such who turn aside by the flocks of his Companions, but going forth by the footsteps of the Flocks, besides the Shepherds Tents: Yet with this protested Dissent from, and Testimony against all the above mentioned corruptions, defections, and offensive Courses, which obliged us to stand at a distance, in times of Deformation, that our present joyning, in these circumstances, when these are removed, may not infer or be interpreted, an Approving of what we formerly Condemned, and be free from all partaking in these Defections, by Consent, Connivance, Complacence, or Communion therein. For which we humbly Supplicate, That these our Humble Proposals, may be Recorded in the Books of Assembly.

Tho. Lining.
Al. Shields.
Will. Boyd.

The Act of Assembly hereanent (which the Reverend Ministers that were appointed to draw it, were Pleas'd first to let us see, and upon our objecting against some Expressions of the first Draught, did Condescend to amend it) is here annexed;

Edinburgh. 25. Octob. 1690. Ann Merid. Sess. 9.

WHereas Mr. Thomas Lining, Mr. Alexander Shields, and Mr. Will. Boyd, have presented to this Assembly two Papers: One containing the expressions of their Purpose and Promise of being Subject to the Authority of this Church, as formerly Constituted, and now Restored in its several Judicatories: The other offer'd for the exoneration of their Consciences. Which Paper, containing their Submission and Subjection, did after the exhibition of the other to the Assembly, become binding upon them, according to the promise therein made. Likew after that other and longer Paper, had been read before the Committee of Overtures, it was exhibite to, and Received by the Assembly, together with the Reasons from the said Committee, why it should not be publicly read in full Assembly. Which Reasons being duly considered; And the said other Paper of Submission and Subjection publicly Read, and Judicially owned by the forenamed Persons in presence of the Assembly. The Assembly did conclude by one single Vote, that the fore-
said

longer Paper should not be read: And that the abovenamed Persons should be Received into the fellowship of this Church, on the terms of Submission and Subjection contained in the said Paper: And after passing of the said Vote, and that they were gravely Admonished by the Moderator to walk Orderly in time coming, in opposition to all Schisme & Division, it was Declared to them, by the Moderator, in the name of the Assembly, that the Assembly did receive them into the Fellowship of this Church, to enjoy the Priviledges thereof, and perform the Duties therein, whereof they are, and shall be found Capable. Whereupon, and at their Desire, it was Ordained, that the Act should be made, and an Extract thereof given to them in good Forme. Extracted out of the Records of the Assembly.

JO. SPALDING, Cls. Syn. Gen.

From which Act, we shall only take notice of two things. One is, That our Paper of Proposals was neither refused or rejected, but Received by the Assembly; Nor was it canvassed or cognosed upon, because judged inconvenient to be Read; Nor was it condemned, without Cognizance or Decision, by the Character given of it in the Overtures, since it is plain the Vote of the Assembly was not, whether the Reasons or Character given in the Overtures should be approved or not. But it was concluded by one single Vote only, That the foresaid longer Paper should not be Read, And that the abovenamed Persons should be Received, &c. As the Act Declares. There is a great Difference betwixt the Voting that it should not be Read, and Voting that it should not be Read for these Reasons of the Overtures. A second is, That it appears we are received into the Communion of this Church, upon no Terms condemnatory of, or contradictory unto our former Testimony; But only on the Terms of Submission and Subjection contained in the Shorter Paper; Which shorter Paper did introduce our Testimony and obliged us to Submission and Subjection after the Exhibition of it; And therefore the Submission could not be contrary to it.

But now to conclude, with a hint at our Motives, that induced us to this Union, which may be as variously misconstrued and misrepresented as our design was, in applying to the Assembly for it, and as the manner and effect of that application was, the mistakes whereof are touched above. We can with some singleness of Heart say, as far as Infirmitie or Corruption may allow, that we were not induced to it, from any Carnal motive, or for any selfish end: It was not any lucrative prospect of outward Profits or Emoluments in Settlements, or Anxiety for provision,

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that prompted us to it: Neither was it the alluring Pleasures of Peace and Ease, and the expectation of better Accomodations, then we could have in an unsected Lot, or Impatience under the inconveniencies thereof, that persuaded us to it: Nor was it the hope of airy honour and popular Applause which we had in greater measure, and with greater noise, as we stood before, and which we could not well expect by *Submission*, but rather the contrare; Tho' to get the honour of being *Peaceable* and *Painful*, and the Blessing of *Peace-makers*, was truly the matter of our Ambition: Nor was it any provocation from, or dissatisfaction with that part of the Lords People, with whom we had sweet fellowship, that tempted us to joyn with these, from whom they and we, were disjoyned before: Nor was it any Levity of Mind, Inconstancy of Judgement, or change of Principles, that moved us to this *Union* and *Submission*: For tho' there had been such a change of Thoughts about these thornie Points, upon which our Differences and Divisions were stated; yet as in that case, we, who require such plainnels of Confession, in others, could not but think our selves obliged to declare such a Change in some open Recantation, So it would not have been our shame to Confess our Errors. Our Sentiments are shallow, and changeable, as other Mens, having the imperfection of Mutability, as well as Fallibility, common to all, in this side of time; nevertheless it was not any change of Sentiments, but only change of providential Circumstances, that made us now submit, and not before. For as we adhere to our Testimony, exhibited to the Venerable *Assembly*, and to the substance of all our former Testimonies, so we know no Truth or Duty, that ever we asserted or contended for, but what we think, we could Seal with our Blood, if we were called to it. And we know no Corruption, Defection, or Sin, that ever we witnessed against, or withdrew from, but what we would yet contend against, and withdraw from, in the same manner, if we were in the same Circumstances; and yet think our selves obliged to contend and witness against, but not in a divided way, but in a way of *Order* and *Union*, according to the Apostles way of the Spirits of the Prophets being subject to the Prophets.

Our True and Sincere *Motive* then, inducing us to *Union* and *Submission*, which in these Circumstances, had such force on our Consciences, that we durst not resist for a World, were these.

I. It was ever our Judgement, that *Union* and *Communion* is necessary among the People of GOD, when ever it can be attained, or intertaind without Sin. In that Case, at all times *Opinionum varietas, Opinantium Unionis*, may well consist. Which Truth is founded upon Scripture Precepts

cepts, Promises, and Precedents, Commanding, Confirming, and Commending the Duties of mutual Love, Reconciliation, Peace, Union, and Communion, among the People of GOD; even when there were several Dissentions, Faintings, Faillings, Offences, Corruptions, and Defections, among them, in several circumstances, nowayes involving the Joyners in sin. But so it is, in the present circumstances, We may have such Union and Communion, without partaking of their guilt, with whom we joyn. For the sins and scandals that scarr'd us from this benefite, in times of defection and division, are so far happily removed and antiquated, that they are neither established in the Constitution of the Church, nor ratified and approved in Acts of Assembly, nor persisted in by present Administrations, nor any way affecting Ministerial Exercises; nor do they continue to be our Snares, and Stumbling-blocks, either to involve us in the guilt of them, or to keep us still jangling about them, and consequently must cease to be grounds of Separation. There is now no part of the *Presbyterian Ministry*, that in Ministerial Exercises is hampered with, or has any dependence on *Exotick Erastian Usurpations*: None of their Meetings do now hold their Freedom from, nor are modified by the *Supremacy*, or any encroaching power: And therefore in our present Communion, we keep our selves free of all Participation with these Corruptions now removed. And our *Joyning* can not so much as be interpreted a Submitting to, or Complying with any Defection directly or indirectly. Its true, the guilt of these Defections remains, as long as they are not acknowledged; but the establishment of them, the practice of them, the present offence and tentation of them, does not remain. It remains to be their guilt, that will not acknowledge them; and they that are convinced of the guilt of them, and will not confess, so far as they are convinced, from searching the Scriptures, and their own Consciences, shew themselves no Friends to the Churches peace. But if, because they will not hear, our Soul shall weep in secret places, &c as we are called, we do not omit a witness against these Defections, the want of that Confession, through want of Conviction, of the sinfulness of these Courses offending us, can neither be a Sin to us, nor a ground of Separation, being only a difference of judgement, which we alwayes disclaimed to be a ground of withdrawing.

2 It was alwayes our Judgement and Intention, that when ever Presbyterian Government, in its Courts, Power, Order, and Freedom were established, we should submit to it: Nay it was not only our resolution, but our Engagement, at the Renewing of the Covenants, that we should

not Separate From any part of the Communion of the true Reformed Covenanted Church of Scotland; holding purely and intirely the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the same, in Principle and Exercise, according to the Rules of Christ, and standing Acts and Constitutions of this Church. And that when we should study to maintain Union and Communion, in Truth and Duty, with all the Ministers and Members of this Church, that do, And in so far as they do follow the Institutions of Christ, And that when they return unto, and fix their ground on the old established Foundations, according to the Word of God, & Constitutions of this Church setled before the Covenanted Reformation stopped, we should then embrace and maintaine Union and Communion with them, and Submission to them in the LORD. But so it is, that all the Ordinances of Christ are established in Purity and Freedom. The Doctrine, is asserted, in the Confession of Faith, now ratified in Parliament, and several controverted Truths formerly obscured by Calumnies, are now victoriously vindicated. The Worship now, not Tolerated, but Established and Authorized, and Administred in Purity, Plenty, and Peace; and the Lights of the Church are no more hide under Beds or Bushells, but set and shining on the Candlestick, to give light to all that are in the House. And the Discipline and Government Presbyterial is now restored to what it was anno 1592. Wherefore we must needs return to our Ancient Union, Communion and Order, when the Church is now returned to the enjoyment and establishment of her Ancient Constitutions, when the Prelatick, Erastian, Antichristian and Tyrannical Usurpations on the Churches Rights, and the Defections and Corruptions flowing therefrom and introduced thereby are removed; And the Churches intinct Power and Capacity to remove legally all remaining Offences is restored and reintegrated, we could not but submit our selves, & pay that deference to Ecclesiastick Judicatories, senced in the Name of our only Head and King Jesus Christ, as to subject our selves to them. We never owned a division from the Church, but only from a party carrying on defection, in a broken and declining State of the Church, and therefore when the Church is not now in that State, but recovering her freedom from these breaches & backslidings, we could not now maintain such a division. As long as they were involved in, and promoting courses of Deformation, we stood aloof, but now when they are promoting Reformation, in asserting the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, and opposing Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, and what is contrare to sound Doctrine; and the power of Godliness, we could not but joyn with them. Its true several Corruptions yet remain unre-

unreformed, as some of the former are not condemned: But at all those Corruptions, on which we founded our Separation, because of the hazard of our partaking of the guilt of them, are removed: So we could not suspend our Union and Communion, until those that remain should be Reformed, and the former Condemned, but rather thought it expedient to Unite, that they may be the sooner Reformed, as it is more probable we may sooner obtain a Reformation of the present, and a Condemnation of past Corruptions in an United way, then in a Divided way. Its foolish to expect the Church can be settled without Corruptions, all at once, in one Day or one Year, but must crave time, as the building of *Solomons Temple*, and the second Temple, after the *Babylonish Captivity*, which was not accomplished in several years: Nor can it be planted over again all at once, no more then in *Joshuas dayes*, or the Judges, or in the time of the Reforming Kings of *Judah*, untill the *Canaanites*, & other Enemies be subdued; Nor can it be purged totally altogether, but gradually, lest it be in hazard of a Superpurgation.

3. It was ever our Judgement, that Division was a great Misery, and when Unnecessary and Unreasonable, a great Sin: And even when we could not avoid it, we were weary of it, and Longed and Prayed for a time of healing and an opportunity of bringing it to a Close. But if ever there was a time, when Division was a Misery and a Sin, because Unnecessary and Unreasonable, now it is; And if ever there was an opportunity of healing, now there is: When the Causes and Occasions of our Divisions are removed and antiquated; When the Object of them, is so far altered that the providences of this day, call and encourage, all Divided Parties among *Presbyterians* to contend together for the common Reformation against the Common Adversarie. When the sad effects of them have made all the Godly weary of them; And the future effects of their Continuance at this time more to be feared then ever, when the wicked Contrivances of Enemies to Divide and Destroy the Church, and hinder its Reformation, are so many and mighty; When Errors and Ignorance making the People a prey, are so abounding: When also the proper Remedy of them is now in our offer, having a Nail granted to us in the holy place to set up the House of our God, and to repair the Desolations thereof, by access to *Assemblies*: And when things are now come to such a Chock and Crisis, that if there be not present application of the Remedy, and some Endeavours used for Union, now in the tide of it, the breach in all probability will grow wider, and more incurable. When we considered both the Mercies of the times, the Matters of praise, bringing

bringing forth so many considerable Advantages to the Cause, and ourselves, we could not but think our selves called to another Work, than breaking what God is healing, and retarding the Work by our Divisions. And when we considered the Miseries of the times, and matters of Mourning, the Past and Present Causes and Effects of the Lords anger, burning up & like to consume this Church and Kingdom, we could not but see other work shapen out to us, than this byting and devouring one another, when the Lord in his holy Judgements, & the Antichristian Party, in their wicked designs are threatening to devour us all.

4. We were alwayes of the opinion, that *Holy Union*, was a necessary duty, and comfortable Blessing, being so frequently Commanded, Commended, Promised, and Prayed for as a Blessing, and the want of it, threatned and lamented as a Misery in Scripture: And as we alwayes prayed for it, and longed for it, and bemoaned the miss of it, so we alwayes desired that it should be, and waited until we obtained accels to get it qualified as the Scripture requires it, that it might be both happy & Holy, and as *Aarons* precious Oyntment, that ran down to the skirts of his Garments, composed according to Divine Art, made up, not of carnal and corrupt politicks, in a sinful Confederacy or Conspiracy for Defection, but composed of Gospel Simples, by the wisdom, which is from above, first pure, then peaceable, that it might be in the Lord, and for the Lord, in Truth and Holiness, having pure Love for its motive, Bond and Beauty, Christ for its Foundation, and His Word for its Rule. But tho we could not get every thing in this present *Union*, that might make it Comfortable and Acceptable to all, nor every thing removed, that is Gravaminous, and impairs its Comfort, Yet we know nothing in the matter of it, which is offensive, upon the account of its sinfulness. For it will abide the trial of these required Qualifications: It is not an *Union* of Confederacy in Compliance with wicked Usurpations, but in subjection to the Churches Intrinsic Power and in the use and enjoyment of the Churches Liberties: It is not an *Union* of Conspiracy in Deformation, but in Endeavours to promote Reformation: It is not an *Union* in, or with, or under *Prelacy*, *Supremacy*, or *Tyranny*, *Indulgence*, or *Tolerance*, &c. but in, and with, and under *Presbyterial Government*, which is an holy ordinance of Christ. It is not an *Union*, that obstructs any Duty, foregoes any Truth, or involves us in any sin: It is not an *Union* with sin, tho it be of Sinners with Sinners, now mutually returned to their Common Duties. All the Common Rules of approven *Union* agree in this: There is no ground of Division standing, which could warrant a breach, if there

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there had been none before, and therefore there is no ground to continue it in the present circumstances. There is nothing in it, to involve us in the guilt of past or present sin, or the sinne. There is nothing in it, obliging us to condemn Duty or justify sin, or restraining us from any Duty, we are called to. We were neither required to justify defections, nor to Condemn our Testimonies against them; Nor to subscribe to any sinful Imposition, in the termes of Communion, putting us in hazard of partaking with any sin. On the Contrary, we were allowed to exhibite our Remonstrance and Testimony, against all the past or present Corruptions, stumbling to us. And no other Basis is stated, whereupon we *Unite*, but the Word of God, Confessions of faith, Books of Discipline Acts of General Assemblies, National and Solemn Covenants, and the whole Contexture of the ancient Order of this Church.

5. We alwayes thought indeed a Testimony was needful, against all the defections of the time, and that this was not to be receded from nor buried in oblivion; We are of the same mind still. And if *Union* could not have been obtained, on any other terms, than such as imposed the receding from, or condemning of our former Testimony against Defections, we would neither have sought it, nor embraced it. But as the particular Testimony, of every time, in severall respects must change with the times, according as the Iniquities of Truth, change their assaults & Weapons against it, and defections from it, perversions of it, and contradictions to it, do vary. And as it can never be buried so long as all Truths and Duties are witnessed for, and errors and sins are witnessed against by us, in our respective stations; And nothing is condemned by us, that was approved before, nor approved that was Condemned before, and there is no Engagement to forebear any Duty: So having been allowed to exhibite our *Testimony* to an *Assembly*, in a more publick manner, than ever we had access before, and being not required nor resolved, to alter the matter of our Testimony, only the manner of it by Separation, We think our present *Union* and *Submission*, is so far from burying our Testimony against defections, that it tends much for its honour, to give occasion of recording it, that such a People continued it alwayes, under all discouragements and difficulties, while defections stood; But as soon as ever they found themselves in any Capacity to joyne with the Ministrie without sin, they had such respect to the Ordinances, and the peace of the Church, that they would no longer Separate, notwithstanding all former provocations. On the other hand we think to continue Division and Separation at the time, would tend rather to the Scandal and
Reproach

